2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 13

HOUSEKEEPING PROBLEMS

BEFORE we could really settle down to the business of life there were several practical problems to clear up. Water was naturally the first item. The jolly little stream just in front of our rest-house did not run by any means all the time. It brings water from the great glacier behind Báltít; the actual aqueduct channel is some twelve miles long, and represents an amazing feat of engineering. It was made about three generations ago—before which the "New Settlements" of Aliábád and her outliers did not exist—when iron was still practically unknown in Hunza. The excavations and the galleries on which it is piloted so skilfully over gorges and along impossible cliff faces were all made with wooden shovels and picks tipped with ibex horn. The people had—and have—no instruments of precision, no theodolites, nor levels. Against this they have some hereditary instinct that we lack, and an inherited or traditional common sense that enables them to adjust the necessary downward gradients exactly right. You never hear of anyone making a false shot in laying out a water channel, and you never hear of any "labour" difficulties. When a new work is undertaken for the public good it is supervised by the Mír, or his Wazír acting for him, and it is carried out by communal labour, of which everyone recognizes the justice and necessity. The Dála, which will frequently recur in my story, is the main aqueduct that supplies Aliábád, but it has to feed other villages *en route*, and our stream, which was its last section, was therefore only in action at certain times. These are, however, known to everyone, and our people drew water enough when they could get it to carry on for the day or half-day when it would be cut off.